**Nationalistic Identity**

I believe that nation is definitely the major contributing factor to shaping both collective and individual identities. Our ideologies are based on how we, as a nation, perceive anything and everything around us and how we, as individuals, react to different situations presented to us by nationalistic and ethnocentric ideas and beliefs. A nation, as defined in the text *Exploring Nationalism*, is a very large collective group of people, not necessarily contained in a country, in which most of their actions reflect the similar thoughts and opinions of the whole group. A nation is also defined by Dictionary.com as being “*a large body of people, associated with a particular territory, that is sufficiently conscious of its unity to seek or to possess a government peculiarly its own*”. Just as the individuals define the nation, the national values and beliefs can define the people’s identity. This just shows that it isn’t just your geography that defines your identity, it is how you, as an individual, define nation and define your own individual and collective identities. Nation is a part of how people live their lives everyday, and who you are as a collective identity ultimately contributes to how nationalism is almost even a guideline on how to live your life and define your identity.

The most obvious example of how nation shapes our collective and individual identities is national heritage. If people were to talk to their ancestors, they would be given full stories of how Canada is the best place in the world for numerous reasons, giving full length details of how Canada struggled as a nation to fight in the World Wars and how dying for your country is so patriotic and fulfilling that it really makes them feel love for their country. They would point out that their national identity is based solely on how they felt patriotic whenever they saw problems in Canada and were able to end the problems, and how when they were given the opportunity to free Canada from the war they felt that it was their duty as a Canadian to sacrifice their lives for the common good and to preserve their collective identities.

A good example of this sense of patriotism and nationalistic identity is in the French Revolution, from 1789 – 1799, where the people of France rose up and struck down the forces of their corrupt King Louis XVI in pursuit of holding up their slogan, Equality, Liberty and Brotherhood. They were not being given those values under their leader, so they built up a new Third Estate, and France created the Declaration of the Rights of Man in 1789, which began with the destruction of the famous Bastille. This coming together as a common people gave the Third Estate a sense of identity and freedom, and the people of France became more powerful as their own nation inside a nation. France now has a standard for the people allowed there, which shows that as a collective identity, they believe they are too high class of a nation and they persecute against religious freedom and racial integrity for the good of the French nation.

When someone looks at both identity and nation individually, they can probably break each of those words into categories and understandings. In the text *Exploring Nationalism*, nation is broken down into eight “understandings” to help define nation. Nation could be understood from a linguistic, ethnic, cultural, religious, geographic, relationship to land, spiritual, and political perspectives, and so can identity. Identity is made up of all those components and more, because identity is who you are and nation describes the identity of a group. Some people believe that because Canada doesn’t contain one individual religion or political value then Canada Is not a nation, but I believe that individualism allows us to come together and decide on one political leader and one main religion. In Tibet, because they have had controlled government for thousands of years, they are a nation, which shows that even though they all have different beliefs on who to vote for they still continue to maintain a government. Another way to look at the comparison of nation and identity is through the concepts that form them. Nation is a concept, and it is really only a broad version of identity. If people come together as a group of individual identities and create a common collective identity, they have now created a nation.

When you think about nation and how it shapes someone’s lives, you start to notice loyalties and how they play into patriotism and nationalistic identities. One example of nationalistic loyalties in Canada is the Oka Crisis in 1990 in Quebec. The Mohawk nation of Oka, Quebec got together and showed their connection to the land and their loyalties to their Aboriginal nation by barricading where the government was going to put up a golf course on their sacred land. Although the government showed up and moved the people away from the land, the fury of the people and their love for their national heritage showed the Quebecois government that nationalistic loyalties inside of Canada are stronger and more important than entertainment.

So yes, nation is in fact the foundation of identity. No, nation is not someone’s identity, but is in the building blocks to building your identity, and without nation and a sense of belonging we would have trouble describing our identity. Although nation shows more of our collective identity, it still affects our individual identities as stated previously through examples of the World Wars and the French Revolution. Also, knowing that you as an individual are also part of a larger group, a nation or collective force, allows you to contribute to your nation and provide a better nation for generations preceding your own. Nation will always be a part of my life, your life, and everyone else’s too as long as everyone sticks to their collective and individual identities. By embracing one’s community and contributing to one’s nation, you create a national heritage that will affect how people in later years, maybe even hundreds of years like the French Revolution was to us now.

**Bibliography**

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